

TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD) IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe teachers' strategies for teaching children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in elementary school and to identify the challenges faced during the learning process. The study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving classroom teachers, special education teachers, and students with ADHD in an inclusive elementary school. Data analysis utilized the Miles and Huberman model. The results indicate that children with ADHD experience difficulties in maintaining focus, exhibit impulsive behavior, and display excessive motor activity, all of which impact the learning process. Teachers also face challenges such as limited understanding of ADHD, a lack of learning materials, and insufficient time for individual support. To address these issues, teachers implement various strategies, such as the use of visual and concrete materials, activity-based learning, brief and structured instructions, individualized approaches, and positive reinforcement. This study demonstrates that adaptive learning strategies and an inclusive learning environment can help increase the engagement of children with ADHD in the learning process.

Keywords: *ADHD, Inclusive Education, Elementary School, Teacher Strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is an educational approach that involves providing a learning environment that supports all students, including those with special needs, so that all students from diverse backgrounds and with varying levels of knowledge have equal opportunities to develop without discrimination (Wulandari & Estu Harsiwi, 2024). Education also guarantees every citizen's right to a proper education, as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution. In line with this, Ministry of Education Regulation No. 70 of 2009 on Inclusive Education emphasizes that every student, including children with special needs, has the right to receive quality, equitable education that is appropriate to their needs and abilities. Consequently, schools have a responsibility to provide appropriate learning services for all students, including those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (Ningrum & Rusmawan, 2023).

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurological and neurodevelopmental disorder in childhood characterized by an inability to focus, impulsivity, restlessness, and

hyperactivity (Karlenata & Mutiara, 2024). This condition results in children with ADHD facing difficulties in understanding learning materials (Qondias et al., 2025). Therefore, appropriate learning strategies are necessary so that children with ADHD can participate in the learning process optimally (Ulpa & Selian, 2025). In elementary school education, teachers play a crucial role in determining the learning success of children with ADHD. Teachers are not only tasked with delivering content but are also expected to understand the characteristics of children with ADHD and apply learning strategies that meet their specific needs (Maharani & Harsiwi, 2025). However, in practice, teaching children with ADHD still faces various challenges.

One example of this issue is found in the study conducted by Juherna et al. (2026), in which a child hit a classmate, raising concerns that the child might cause injury. There are also other children with ADHD who find it difficult to interact with their peers because they are too focused on their own world. Additionally, from the teachers' perspective, limited knowledge of ADHD characteristics, a lack of training in inclusive education, and a shortage of adaptive learning materials pose barriers to the implementation of instruction in elementary schools.

This issue becomes more complex because every child with ADHD has their own unique characteristics and needs. Teachers are expected to be able to create engaging and flexible learning strategies throughout the learning process. Appropriate strategies are necessary so that children with ADHD can participate in learning more effectively (Rasyad & Tarihoran, 2022). Appropriate learning strategies are essential so that children with ADHD can participate in learning more effectively. The use of concrete and visual media, activity-based learning, providing brief and clear instructions, positive reinforcement, creative learning, and arranging a conducive learning environment are some strategies considered capable of helping to improve the attention and participation of children with ADHD in learning (Angraeni & Afifah, 2025).

In addition to factors related to learning at school, the educational success of children with ADHD is also influenced by support from their immediate environment, particularly their families. Parents play a crucial role in guiding their children's academic and behavioral development at home. However, collaboration between teachers and parents in supporting the learning of children with ADHD has not yet been fully optimized (Avrilly et al., 2024). Some parents do not yet fully understand the characteristics of ADHD, while schools sometimes lack structured support systems for children with special needs. As a result, the learning processes children experience at school and at home often do not align.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically a descriptive qualitative research design. This approach was chosen to describe teachers' strategies in teaching children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in elementary school and to identify various challenges faced during the learning process (Zulfirman, 2022). The study was conducted at an elementary school implementing inclusive education, with participants including classroom teachers, special education teachers (SETs), and students with ADHD. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on the consideration that they had direct experience and involvement in the education of children with ADHD.

Data collection techniques included observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to examine the learning process, the learning behaviors of children with ADHD, and the strategies implemented by teachers in the classroom. Interviews were conducted with classroom teachers and special education teachers to obtain information regarding learning strategies and the challenges they faced. Documentation was used as supporting data for the study. The research instruments consisted of observation sheets and interview guidelines. Data analysis employed the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity was established through source triangulation and methodological triangulation by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation (Felsyama Jeniviarsa et al., 2026).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research findings indicate that the learning process for children with ADHD in elementary school involves complex dynamics and requires special attention from teachers, schools, and parents. Based on classroom observations and in-depth interviews with classroom teachers and special education teachers, it was found that children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) exhibit behavioral characteristics that significantly impact the learning process. During learning activities, the children appear to have difficulty sustaining attention for extended periods. When teachers explain material verbally or use a lecture-style method, the children tend to be easily distracted by sounds, movements, or objects in their surroundings, causing their focus to wane quickly. This prevents them from following the entire sequence of the explanation and impacts their understanding of the learning material. In addition to concentration difficulties, impulsive behavior is also evident when the child is working on tasks. The child often answers hastily without reading the instructions completely, moves from one task to another before

completing the given steps, and writes answers in a disorganized manner. Excessive motor activities such as tapping the desk, wiggling their feet, talking to themselves, pacing, or fiddling with writing utensils are behaviors children frequently exhibit, making the learning process less conducive. In fact, it has been found that children's academic performance is inconsistent; on one day a child may complete tasks well, but the next day their ability drops drastically due to changes in emotions and focus levels.

Teachers also face significant challenges in managing instruction in inclusive classrooms. Teachers report that the impulsive and hyperactive behavior of children with ADHD often disrupts the flow of instruction, causing other students to lose focus as well. Limited class time makes it difficult for teachers to provide individualized support, even though children with ADHD require repeated instructions and step-by-step guidance to fully grasp the material. Another challenge arises from some teachers' limited understanding of ADHD characteristics. Some teachers still struggle to distinguish between the active behavior common among elementary school students and ADHD symptoms that require special attention. Additionally, teachers also report lacking specialized learning materials tailored to the needs of children with ADHD. The absence of engaging and interactive materials makes it difficult for learning activities to sustain the focus of children with ADHD. Regarding assessment, teachers also face challenges because evaluation results for children with ADHD tend to be inconsistent. On some occasions, a child can complete tasks well, but at other times, shows results far below their actual ability. This makes it difficult for teachers to accurately assess the child's learning progress. Additionally, the relationship between schools and parents is not yet fully optimized. Some parents do not fully understand the characteristics of ADHD or view their child's behavior as mere misbehavior. Consequently, academic support at home is not maximized, so learning strategies at school do not align with the family environment.

Despite facing various challenges, teachers have sought to implement a number of strategies to support learning for children with ADHD. Teachers tend to use visual and concrete aids such as pictures, cards, and simple manipulatives to help children understand the learning material. Learning strategies are also made more varied, for example through educational games or activity-based learning, so that children are more actively engaged during the learning process. Instructions are delivered concisely, clearly, and in a structured manner, then repeated several times to ensure the child understands the steps to be followed. Teachers also take an individualized approach when a child begins to lose focus, such as providing direct support or offering additional guidance. In terms of behavior management, teachers use positive reinforcement techniques—such as praise, stickers, or simple rewards—whenever a child demonstrates improved focus or

completes a task well. The seating arrangement for children with ADHD is also carefully considered to minimize distractions, typically by placing the child closer to the teacher. Additionally, the teacher provides a brief break (brain break) lasting one to two minutes when a child appears restless or begins to lose focus, allowing the child to re-engage optimally in the learning process.

The findings of this study also confirm that teachers and special education teachers have a critical need for adaptive learning materials specifically designed to support the learning styles of children with ADHD. Materials that are interactive, visually engaging, and allow children to manipulate objects directly are considered effective in improving focus and facilitating understanding of the learning material. Such materials not only provide visually appealing content but also positively stimulate children's motor skills and facilitate the learning process through exploration.

Overall, the findings and discussion of this study indicate that teaching children with ADHD requires an integrated and holistic approach. Teachers need a deeper understanding of ADHD characteristics, training in behavior management, and instructional media support tailored to the children's needs. Additionally, collaboration between teachers, schools, and parents plays a significant role in supporting the success of learning. When all parties are actively involved, children with ADHD can receive educational services that are more equitable, adaptive, and aligned with their rights as students in an inclusive environment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research and discussions conducted, it can be concluded that education for children with ADHD in elementary school still faces significant challenges, whether in terms of the children's behavior, teacher readiness, or the support provided by the learning environment. Children with ADHD exhibit primary difficulties such as a lack of focus, impulsive behavior, and excessive motor activity, which directly impact the learning process. These conditions often lead to inconsistent academic performance and difficulty keeping up with classroom instruction.

From the teachers' perspective, it was found that limited understanding of ADHD characteristics, a lack of appropriate teaching materials, and insufficient time for individual support are factors that hinder the learning process. Teachers also face challenges in conducting assessments because the learning outcomes of children with ADHD are inconsistent. In addition,

collaboration between schools and parents has not been optimal, so academic support at home does not always align with learning strategies at school.

Nevertheless, teachers have made efforts to implement various learning strategies, such as the use of visual and concrete materials, providing brief and structured instructions, individualized approaches, positive reinforcement, and creating a more conducive learning environment. These strategies are considered effective in helping to improve the focus and engagement of children with ADHD during the learning process. Overall, teaching children with ADHD requires an adaptive and collaborative approach. Teachers, schools, and parents need to work together to create a learning environment that supports the needs of children with ADHD so that the learning process can be more effective, inclusive, and meaningful.

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